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**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

#18
6/13/14

Serial No. 09/410,642	Confirmation No.: 7187
Application of: David A. EDWARDS	Customer No.: 30429
Filed: October 1, 1999	
Art Unit: 2113	
Examiner: M. MASKULINSKI	
Attorney Docket No. 99-TK-563SS C1	
For: DETECTION OF INFORMATION ON AN INTERCONNECT	

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APPELLANT'S BRIEF UNDER 37 CFR 1.192

MAIL STOP APPEAL BRIEF - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

I. Real Party in Interest

STMicroelectronics Inc.
1310 Electronics Drive
Carrollton, TX 75006

II. Related Appeals and Interferences

No other appeals or interferences are currently known to Appellant that will directly affect, be directly affected by, or have a bearing on the decision to be rendered by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences in the present appeal.

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III. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-19 and 21-36 are pending in the application. No claims have been allowed. On April 5, 2004, Appellants appealed from the final rejection by filing a Notice of Appeal of all pending claims.

IV. Status of Amendments

The amendments filed August 7, 2002, December 30, 2002, February 24, 2003, and July 15, 2003 have been entered.

V. Summary of the Invention

Briefly, the inventions of claims 1, 22, 34, 35 and 36 are directed towards a circuit (e.g., bus analyzer 40 in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4) for detecting information contained in a packet (Fig. 2A and Fig. 2B) on an interconnect (22 in Fig. 1 and Fig. 3). The packets are defined, and described in Fig. 2A and Fig. 2B, as comprising a number of fields containing information including both data and packet routing information. The claimed invention involves and is inextricably entwined with packet data communication interconnections. The specification sets out detailed examples of packet formats on pages 10-11 describing Fig. 2A and Fig. 2B. The term "packet" is used throughout the specification in a manner that is consistent with the commonly understood meaning of the term.

In the invention of claim 1 the circuitry includes circuitry (shown and described in reference to Fig. 4 on page 8, lines 33 through page 8, line 29) for determining if a part of the information detected in a packet satisfies one or more conditions in combination with circuitry for performing one or more actions in response (e.g., watch point comparator 48 in Fig. 4 which is described in greater detail with reference to Fig. 6).

In the invention of claim 22, a monitoring circuit (e.g., bus analyzer 40) in combination with circuitry for determining if information in a packet matches one or more conditions (e.g., watch point comparator 48 which is described in greater detail in reference to Fig. 6) and circuitry for performing one or more actions when a condition is matched (e.g., watch point buffer 52 and watch point buffer controllers 50/58).

In the invention of claim 34 the circuitry includes circuitry (shown and described in reference to Fig. 4 on page 8, lines 33 through page 8, line 29) for determining if a part of the information detected in a packet satisfies one or more conditions.

The invention of claim 33 describes a method involving monitoring information-containing packets on an interconnect (e.g., using bus analyzer 40), determining when the information in the packet satisfies one or more conditions (e.g., using watch point comparator 48) and carrying out one or more actions (e.g., using watch point buffer 52 to capture a packet) when the information in the packet matches a condition.

The inventions described in claims 35 and 36 are similar to that described in claim 1, although in claim 35 the circuitry for performing one or more responsive actions is presented as a circuit arrangement to select the information that satisfies the condition(s). The invention of claim 36 is more specific than claim 1 in that claim 36 involves information from at least one field within the packet.

VI. Issues

- A. Whether claims 1-6, 11-13, 15-18, 21, 22, and 25-34 are anticipated by Wolff et al.**
- B. Whether claims 1, 22, and 33-36 are anticipated by Goodrum et al.**
- C. Whether Wolff et al. alone or in combination with Cepulis, Ardini, Jr. et al., Pizzica, Bersteyn et al, and/or Merrill et al supports an obviousness rejection of claims 7-10, 14, 19, 23, 24, 35 and 36.**

VII. Grouping of Claims

Claims 1-19 and 20-36 stand or fall together.

VIII. Argument

A. Whether claims 1-6, 11-13, 15-18, 21, 22, and 25-34 are anticipated by Wolff et al.

The examiner has maintained that Wolff et al. show the circuit set out by independent claims 1, 22, 33 and 34 as well as the various specific claim elements set out in dependent claims 2-6, 11-13, 15-18, 21 and 25-32. While it is appreciated that the Examiner must take the broadest reasonable meaning for claim terminology when determining patentability of claims, it is respectfully believed that the construction of claim terminology being applied to reject the instant claims violate the accepted meanings for those terms.

In particular, claims 1, 22, 33 and 34 each call for, in varying language, packets of information (claims 1 and 34) and information-containing packets (claims 22, 33). The Wolff et al. reference shows two parallel busses, referred to at col. 3, lines 61-64 as the "A bus" and the "B bus", that function to duplicate each other. The A bus and B bus each comprise an identical set of signals. The set of signals described by Wolff et al would not be confused as a packet by anyone of skill in the art of data communication. This set of signals is akin to a circuit-switched connection in which a circuit connection is made between communicating ends of the bus.

The "set of signals" is a square peg which the Examiner attempts to force into the round holes defined by the packets of information and information-containing packets of claims 1, 22, 33 and 34. To do this, the Examiner chooses to construe the definition of a packet as "a serial stream of clocked data bits" (see, e.g., final Office action mailed 2/4/04, page 16, lines 6-8). There is no authority cited for this definition, and this definition contradicts the commonly accepted meaning of the word "packet" as set out in various authoritative definitions of record:

First, Appellant made of record a definition of a packet in a data communication network, as provided by the Modern Dictionary of Electronics, Sixth Ed., Howard W. Sams & Company, 1988, which is "a group of bits, including data and control elements that is switched and transmitted as a unit."

Second, the Examiner proffered a similar definition from IEEE 100, The Authoritative Dictionary of IEEE Standard Terms, Seventh Edition, and states "that a packet in its broadest definition is a unit of data of some finite-size that is transmitted as a unit" (see Office action of 4/15/2003, page 13). Both the first and second definitions are consistent in that they include the concept of a unit of data that is transmitted as a unit. A "serial stream" of clocked data bits does not define a "unit of data" and so is inconsistent with, and impermissibly broader than, the Examiners own definition of "packet". Although it is recognized that a data stream can be encapsulated in packets, clearly one of skill in the art would recognize that a stream and a packet are different. Yet, this is the crux of the Office's reliance on Wolff et al. to reject claims 1 and 22.

As a third definition, Appellant made of record Newton's Telecom Dictionary, 18th Edition (2002), which describes three principle elements of a "packet" as:

- 1) Header—control information such as synchronizing bits, address destination or target device, address of originating device, length of packet, etc.
- 2) Text or payload—the data to be transmitted.
- 3) Trailer—end of packet and error detection and correction bits."

While it is believed that the term packet as used in the claims as originally filed was clear and definite, in the spirit of cooperation claims 1 and 22 were amended to explicitly use a more narrow definition of the word "packet" including packet routing information. Packet routing information, described generally at page 5 of the specification, is a particular type of information that does not appear in a bus-type interconnect of the Wolff reference. The set of signals in Wolff et al. is not routed—it is coupled end-to-end by the physical interconnect. The set of signals in Wolff et al. do not contain routing information as there is but one source and one destination possible. The set of signals in Wolff et al. is not a unit of data, it is a collection of separate signals. Accordingly, Wolff et al. do not show a packet as called for in claims 1 and 22.

Using yet another definition from Newton's Telecom Dictionary, an "Information Packet" is defined as:

"A bundle of data sent over a network. The protocol used determines the size and makeup of the packet."

In Wolff et al, the size of the set of information is determined by the number of signal lines (called "sets of conductors in col. 3, line 60) in the bus, and not by a protocol used. In contrast, the claims call for packets of information in the ordinary meaning of that term where the packet size is determined by a protocol choice, not a hardware limitation.

The patent office itself recognizes in the Manual of Classification (see class 370/352, for example) that packet switching is a distinct, defined type of switching that is different from circuit switched type connections as shown in the Wolff et al. reference.

Further, claims 1, 22, 33 and 34 call for a determination of whether the information in a packet satisfies one or more conditions. Because Wolff et al. compare a binary signal to another binary signal there is one and only one "condition" that can be satisfied. Specifically, Wolff et al. can only determine if the signals match, and determine if any other condition is satisfied.

For at least these reasons, claims 1, 22, 33 and 34 as well as claims 2-6, 11-13, 15-18, 21 and 25-32 that depend from claims 1 and 22 are believed to be allowable over Wolff et al.

B. Whether claims 1, 22 and 33-36 are anticipated by Goodrum et al.

Like the Wolff et al. reference discussed above, Goodrum et al. do not show or suggest monitoring information from packets containing information (or information-containing packets). Goodrum et al. describe several bus types including PCI, EISA, and local bus. None of these are described as packet bus architectures or as conveying packets. It is quite telling that in 185 pages of text and drawings, Goodrum does not once use the word "packet". Nevertheless, the

Office Action states that "In the Abstract, Goodrum et al disclose...an interconnect and a plurality of modules connected to said interconnect for putting packets of information onto the interconnect..." The Abstract contains no such language, and the Office action simply uses Appellant's claim as a template for abstracting the word "bus" into a rejection.

Further, the Examiner points to Goodrums' Fig. 15A and column 14 as showing packets. However, Goodrum et al. do not call these illustrations "packets". These are disclosed as phases of a transaction, or contents of a memory queue. They are not a unit of data of finite size that is transmitted as a unit. Accordingly, this element of claims 1, 16, 24, 25 and 26 is not shown or suggested in the reference.

C. Whether Wolff et al. alone or in combination with Cepulis, Ardini, Jr. et al., Pizzica, Bersteyn et al, and/or Merrill et al supports an obviousness rejection of claims 7-10, 14, 19, 23, 24, 35 and 36.

The Examiner has relied on a variety of other references in combination with Wolff et al. to supply various features of dependent claims 7-10, 14, 19, 23, 24 which all depend from claim 1, as well as independent claims 35 and 36.

Essentially, none of these supplementary references show or suggest that one would modify the conventional bus shown in Wolff et al. to use a packet bus, and then to receive packets of information, determine if parts of those packets of information satisfy one or more conditions, and then perform one or more actions based on a determination that the information in the packet satisfies one or more conditions.

It is almost remarkable, but the word "packet" does not appear even one time in Cepulis, Ardini, Jr. et al., Pizzica, Bersteyn et al, and/or Merrill et al. Accordingly, it is believed that Wolff et al. in combination with any or all of these reference cannot show or suggest the features of independent claims 1, 22, 35 and 36. For at least these reasons, claims 7-10, 14, 19, 23, 24, 35 and 36 are not made obvious by the applied references.

IX. Conclusion

In view of all of the above claims 1-18 and 20-36 are believed to be allowable and the case in condition for allowance and it is respectfully requested that the Examiner's rejections be overturned.

Respectfully submitted,



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I. APPENDIX OF CLAIMS ON APPEAL

1. In a system comprising an interconnect and a plurality of modules connected to said interconnect for putting packets of information onto the interconnect, wherein each packet comprises a number of fields containing information including both data and packet routing information, wherein each module has a unique identification on the interconnect and wherein the routing information identifies at least one of the modules associated with the data, a circuit comprising:

circuitry for receiving at least part of said information;

circuitry for determining if said at least part of said information satisfies one or more conditions; and

circuitry for performing one or more actions in response to the determination that at least part of the information satisfies one or more conditions.

2. A circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein said action comprises the generation of a trace message.

3. A circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein said action comprises the generation of an interrupt message.

4. A circuit as claimed in claim 3, wherein the interrupt is provided to one or more CPUs.

5. A circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein said action is to prevent one or more modules from being granted access to the interconnect.

6. A circuit as claimed in claim 5, wherein circuitry is provided to prevent one or more modules from being granted access to the interconnect.

7. A circuit as claimed in claim 6, wherein said circuitry for preventing a module from putting further information onto the interconnect comprises a register.

8. A circuit as claimed in claim 7, wherein the register comprises one bit for each module and the value of said bit determines if the respective module is prevented from putting further information into the interconnect.

9. A circuit as claimed in claim 8, wherein at least one module is arranged to access said register non intrusively.

10. A circuit as claimed in claim 8, wherein a location is defined in said register for each module, the location being independent of the address of the module used by the interconnect.

11. A circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein the module which puts the information onto the interconnect which matches the one or more conditions is prevented by the preventing circuitry from being granted access to the interconnect.

12. A circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein the determining circuitry comprises comparator circuitry which compares the information on the interconnect with one or more match conditions.

13. A circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein said conditions comprise one or more preconditions and one or more match conditions, said actions being performed when said one or more preconditions and said one or more match conditions have been satisfied.

14. A circuit as claimed in claim 13, wherein one precondition is that the one or more match conditions have occurred a predetermined number of times.

15. A circuit as claimed in claim 13, wherein one precondition is that the circuit is enabled.

16. A circuit as claimed in claim 13, wherein one precondition is that circuitry external to said circuit has been enabled.

17. A circuit as claimed in claim 16, wherein said external circuitry is a latch.

18. A circuit as claimed in claim 13, wherein said match conditions comprise one or more of the following:

an address or address range of the information;

the module or modules which put the information onto the interconnect;

the module or modules which are intended to receive the information on the interconnect; and

the type or types of transactions to which the information relates.

19. A circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein storing circuitry is provided to store the information which satisfies the at least one condition.

20. (canceled).

21. A circuit as claimed in claim 1, wherein said packets of information comprises requests and responses.

22. A functional circuit comprising:

an interconnect;

one or more modules connected to the interconnect; and

a monitoring circuit for monitoring information containing packets put onto the interconnect by one or more modules, said information-containing packets including both data and packet routing information, wherein each module has a unique identification on the interconnect and wherein the routing information identifies at least one of the modules associated with the data, and said monitoring circuit comprising:

circuitry for determining if the information in a packet matches one or more conditions; and

circuitry for performing one or more actions if it is determined that information on the interconnect matches said one or more conditions.

23. A functional circuit as claimed in claim 22, wherein the functional circuit is an integrated circuit.

24. A functional circuit as claimed in claim 23, wherein at least one module is external to said integrated circuit.

25. A functional circuit as claimed in claim 22, wherein an arbiter is provided for arbitrating between the modules to determine which module is granted access to the interconnect at a given time.

26. A functional circuit as claimed in claim 25, wherein said determining circuitry is at least partially in the arbiter.

27. A functional circuit as claimed in claim 25, wherein said determining circuit does not delay the arbitration provided by the arbiter.

28. A functional circuit as claimed in claim 22, wherein said interconnect is a bus.

29. A functional circuit as claimed in claim 22, wherein one of said modules comprises a debug module.

30. A functional circuit as claimed in claim 29, wherein at least some of said circuitry for performing at least one action is in said debug module.

31. A functional circuit as claimed in claim 25, wherein at least some of said circuitry for performing at least one action is in said arbiter.

32. A functional circuit as claimed in claim 29, wherein at least part of the determining circuitry is in the debug module.

33. A method comprising the steps of:
monitoring information containing packets on an interconnect, the information being put onto the interconnect by one or more modules, said information-containing packets including both data and packet routing information, wherein each module has a unique identification on the interconnect and wherein the routing information identifies at least one of the modules associated with the data;

determining if the information on an interconnect satisfies one or more conditions; and

carrying out one or more actions if it is determined that the information containing packet satisfies one or more conditions.

34. A circuit for monitoring packets of information on an interconnect, said packets of information being put onto the interconnect by one or more modules connected to the interconnect, wherein said packets of information include both data and packet routing information, and wherein each module has a unique identification on the interconnect and wherein the routing information identifies at least one of the

modules associated with the data, said circuit being arranged to determine if the information satisfies one or more conditions.

35. A circuit for monitoring packets of information on an interconnect, said packets of information including both data and packet routing information and said packets of information being put onto the interconnect by one or more modules connected to the interconnect, wherein each module has a unique identification on the interconnect and wherein the routing information identifies at least one of the modules associated with the data, and wherein said circuit being arranged to determine if the information satisfies one or more conditions and to select the information satisfying the one or more conditions.

36. A circuit in a system comprising an interconnect and a plurality of modules connected to said interconnect for putting packet-format information onto the interconnect, wherein each packet comprises a number of fields containing information, including a routing field, an address field, a source field, a transaction type field, a transaction identifier field, and an operation code field, and wherein each module has a unique identification on the interconnect and wherein the routing information identifies at least one of the modules, the circuit comprising:

circuitry for receiving at least part of said information from at least one of said fields;

circuitry for determining if said at least part of said information satisfies one or more conditions; and

circuitry for performing one or more actions in response to the determination that at least part of the information satisfies one or more conditions.